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THE COMMONWEAL

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

Politics and Urban Needs

THERE ARE two main ways of explaining the means Mr. Kennedy employed in his thwarted attempt to create a new Department for Urban Affairs with Dr. Robert Weaver at its head. The first is that he hoped to capitalize on the Republicans' awareness of their need for a higher city and Negro vote to put the idea over. In this view his Executive order was a genuine effort to meet a growing nationwide need. Because of the way the idea was presented—and pushed—it seems more likely, however, that it was more of a move to embarrass his Republican adversaries. Of course, if the G.O.P. should lose further ground in state and Congressional elections this November, there would be more of a chance of achieving the sort of program envisaged in this Cabinet post.

The margin of the President's defeat on this measure has led a number of observers to take his strategy here severely to task. The Senate's refusal to bring the question out onto the floor resulted in an even more decisive margin of defeat in the House rejection of his plan. And the votes in both cases failed to adhere wholly to party or even Republican-Southern Democratic coalition lines. A few Democrats from non-Southern states deserted the Administration in both votes. But the almost solid unanimity of Republican Senators and Representatives in opposing the Administration plan should readily provide the campaign arguments the Democrats were seeking.

Curiously, the popularity of the Kennedy image itself is steadily growing—even as the President's power to influence Congress appears actually to be on the decline. Whatever one may think of Senatorial resentment over pressure from the White House on this matter of truly urgent national concern, it is nonetheless a factor to be taken into account. There are also a number of Senators and Congressmen who are genuinely exercised about over-centralization in Washington, inflation and other fears arising from the Administration's federally-oriented domestic program. The external threat of a Communism armed with thermonuclear weapons aimed in our direction makes bipartisanship in foreign policy readily attainable but not on measures devised to meet even the most urgent domestic needs.

The blight which has attacked so many of our larger centers of industry and population is spreading. Many American families are condemned to live under conditions that are an assault upon human dignity. It is hardly surprising that juvenile delinquency, for example, continues to increase. Even if America's urban population were to remain stationary, it would still be a formidable task to supply the low-cost housing and the educational, recreational and medical facilities needed. And the difficulty is that few cities possess the means fully to pay for their own rehabilitation, whereas state legislatures, comprised as they are of majorities from rural districts, manifest less than primary concern for urban needs.

SEVEN OUT of ten Americans are now classified as urban and the proportion is steadily rising. The National Council for Good Cities estimates that within a generation the urban population of the United States will be double what it is today. This points to a need for new homes and new facilities which have to be added to what is required simply to overcome present urban deficiencies. Moreover, our cities present large-scale social problems in their most acute form. The effects of the decline or removal of important industries, of automation, of the inability of young men to obtain gainful employment on leaving school, of racial ghettos and dilapidated housing areas call for immediate answers as well as those of longer range.

A Department of Urban Affairs could offer the advantages of *expertise*. It could be set up in such

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a way that the initiative would be required to come from each individual locality. It could require a due proportion of local matching funds, and grants and/or loans could be made available only after thorough-going requirements as to urgency, priorities and over-all planning had been met. Even then much would depend on the manner in which such a federal agency were operated if grave bureaucratic pitfalls and the wasteful expenditure of large sums were to be avoided.

Something on a scale involving federal participation needs to be done about the plight of the American city. It is hard to predict which means of providing some solution is more likely: the success of some similar attempt by Mr. Kennedy at a later date, or an unexpected Congressional redistricting (by the still predominantly rural state legislatures) that would assure our urban districts an effective representation in the House duly proportionate to their populations.

Narcotics Victory

NEWSPAPERS all over the country have reported the arrest of a narcotics peddler in New York, recently seized by the city's narcotics squad with an enormous supply of pure heroin. The packages weighed in at eighty-eight pounds and amounted to the second largest confiscation ever made by law-enforcement agencies, according to police. Narcotics agents estimated that in the adulterated form in which the drug is sold to addicts, and at the prices which these users are forced to pay, the eighty-eight pounds of heroin would be worth almost twenty-five million dollars.

The sequel to this story is even more striking, however. Soon after the seizure, local police simultaneously voiced their satisfaction at the blow they had dealt the narcotics trade and expressed their concern at the crime wave which would probably result from it. Addicts frequently resort to desperate and criminal lengths to pay for the illegal drugs they have to have, police officials warned, and the severe shortage of heroin, now driving underworld prices to fantastic levels, is likely to set off a wave of robberies, hold-ups and worse, especially of doctors and drugstores.

There are many arguments for the legalization and control of narcotics addiction, and we have printed some in the past. But on the basis of this set of incidents alone, surely there can be no question: there must be something wrong with a law when the enforcement of that law can lead immediately and directly to violence, crime and a serious threat to the public safety.

The Space Age

HOW IMPORTANT is it that the United States has got its man into space at last? This question may not be a popular one now, while the nation still throbs with excitement and pride over the orbital flight of our first real astronaut, Colonel John H. Glenn, Jr. But it is certain to be asked, by old and young fogies and curmudgeons, as soon as the present euphoria abates.

It will doubtless be pointed out that Project Mercury, which reached its justification only on the historic Tuesday of February 20, has cost American taxpayers the staggering sum of four hundred million dollars. And, it will be pointed out further, Project Mercury is only the beginning. Some may even be thoughtless enough to refer to these orbital capsules as "baubles" and "toys," terms once used in connection with the Soviet sputniks. In these parlous times, it will be asked, what is the return on such a stupendous investment of money, effort and national energy, on such a dreadful risk of lives?

Such questions have been asked before, however, and have been answered to the satisfaction of all but a few. As to the money required for our space and missile program, it is really not the first consideration. If any national program is deemed vital, then money must be found to support it; real necessities are not determined by the state of the nation's, or anyone else's, bank balance.

The root question, then, is the importance of a space program, in terms of national defense, progress and well-being. And here, it seems to us, one need not look very far for evidence. The furor over the successful U.S. space flight is itself an indication of the tremendous importance attached to it by the American people, our allies, the neutralist nations and, not least, the U.S.S.R. Aside from these considerable factors of prestige and psychology as they affect our international relations, there have already been indications of the value of the scientific findings made by Col. Glenn and the Friendship 7. The schedule for further penetration of space has been accelerated to call for an eighteen-orbit flight later this year, the development of two- and three-man spacecraft in a year or two and a manned voyage to the moon within four years. Tangible results of the space probes to date are already being seen in communications and weather systems now being perfected.

Last, but unfortunately not least, is the military significance of space exploration. Even now there are military strategists whose major concern is the feasibility of nuclear missile launching stations orbiting the earth in space or on the moon or on Venus and Mars. Without going into the refinements of

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horror involved in the application of nuclear diplomacy to the reaches of outer space, it can at least be said that the resultant risk of cataclysm would be intensified in a fantastic and peculiarly frightful way. Premier Khrushchev is as aware of this as our own space scientists, and it may well be that his new interest in Soviet-U.S. space cooperation derives from our having, in President Kennedy's grim words, "more chips on the table."

In sum, there is every reason for prosecuting a space program to the very limit of our abilities. Within the framework of the balance of terror that defines our relations with the U.S.S.R., in fact, the United States is compelled in the interests of its own survival to make the great leap forward into space. As the President also said, "This is the new ocean, and I believe the United States must sail on it and be in a position second to none."

Let us hope fervently that the common interests of the U.S. and the Soviet Union—in averting annihilation, if nothing else—will lead to genuine cooperation in the use of space science for peace, and then to wider and wider areas of agreement. In the meantime, however, Soviet space technology and our own Project Mercury go on at all-out speed. And every step man makes towards the stars brings to the world a thrill of joy, hope—and dread.

Off-Beat Care for the Aged

IN HIS MOST recent book, *Utopian Essays and Practical Proposals,* Paul Goodman makes the suggestion that some means be found for bringing together aged adults and orphan children. His point is that the aged, who need some sense of usefulness, would have much to offer to orphans, who need some individual love and attention. However ingenious such a scheme, there are many obvious difficulties. Nevertheless, it struck us as a good example of creative thinking about a pressing social problem.

For that reason we were struck by a recent story in the New York *Herald-Tribune.* The story described how an elderly man—79—had been placed by Catholic Charities in a foster home; the foster home in this case consisted of a family with a number of children. The result, according to the story, has been a happy one. Not only has the man been accepted by the family; he has, in addition, been able to make a contribution to the life of the family. The story noted, however, that it is very difficult to interest families in taking in the aged. No doubt the whole idea strikes many as a rather odd one. But it seems to us that there is nothing at all odd about it; indeed, it may be a very sound idea, one that could commend itself to everyone interested not only in the social problem of the aged, but in the dignity of the aged person.

Sixteenth General Assembly

THE ADJOURNMENT last week of the sixteenth General Assembly of the United Nations was no doubt something of a relief to the delegates. While crises—real or imaginary—have become almost a tradition in the U.N., the sixteenth Assembly had more than the usual number. Indeed, at times it looked as if the U.N. could not possibly find a way out of its troubles. Yet, one way or another, it did. The fact that many of its solutions involved temporary or make-shift arrangements ought not to obscure this fact.

The most dangerous crisis, of course, was brought about by the untimely death of Dag Hammarskjold. The defeat, for the time being at least, of the Soviet "troika" proposal, and the election of U Thant of Burma as Acting Secretary General, resolved that constitutional crisis. Moreover, Mr. Thant has, by most reckoning, done excellently and proved to be a vigorous, effective leader. Much of the credit for the U.N.'s success to date in the Congo must go to Mr. Thant who took charge of the U.N.'s Congo operation at the worst possible moment. While the Congo crisis is not yet entirely a thing of the past, the outlook now is far more hopeful than seemed possible a few months ago.

In addition, Mr. Thant's proposal that the U.N. issue $200,000,000 in bonds to pay for the cost of the Congo operation and the U.N. Emergency Force in the Gaza Strip was an ingenious solution to a vexing financial problem. It is a solution, naturally, that has yet to prove itself. So far only Australia, Canada, Great Britain, the Scandinavian nations and the United States have agreed to buy some of the bonds—and President Kennedy may have a fight on his hands to get Congress to authorize him to purchase the $100,000,000 worth that he has pledged. Nevertheless, the prospects are good that most of the bonds will be sold.

The real significance, however, of the U.N.'s financial problems does not lie solely in its need to remain financially solvent. More important still is the fact that a number of nations—most prominently the Soviet Union—refuse to pay their assessment on operations they oppose. Economic coercion has become just one more way for refractory nations to attempt to influence U.N. policy for their own interests. In the long run, the future of the U.N. may be decided by its capacity to combat effectively sabotage by its affluent members. So far this type of

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coercion has been forestalled by the willingness of a comparatively few Western countries to do more than their financial share. But this is hardly a healthy situation.

One reason it is not a healthy situation, apart from the financial burden on a few countries, is that the paying nations are confronting an increasing number of Afro-Asian nations whose votes do much to determine U.N. policies. This will undoubtedly mean an increase in domestic opposition to the U.N. within the paying nations, particularly when the Afro-Asian votes seem to support the Soviet bloc. So far these votes have been fluid and shifting. But it is not hard to imagine Western support for the U. N. becoming far less ardent if a consistent, prolonged anti-Western voting pattern emerges. Should that happen, Western U.N. supporters could find domestic attacks hard to cope with, and the disproportionate Western support hard to justify.

Fortunately, there are no solid reasons for assuming that the Afro-Asian nations will, in the future, consistently oppose the West. It now seems more than likely that they will follow an independent course, bowing neither to the Western nor to the Soviet bloc. In fact, Western fears of antagonism were considerably allayed toward the close of the Assembly by the refusal of most Afro-Asian nations to support a number of Soviet proposals.

It can be said, then, that the sixteenth General Assembly ended on a favorable note. It managed to weather some violent storms and even made some notable contributions to world peace. Most importantly, it showed itself worthy of continued Western support.

Socialists in Japan

Tokyo

LATE IN JANUARY, the *Asahi Shimbun*, the biggest and probably the most influential of the Japanese national dailies, did something very unusual: it carried a signed article on its front page. The article was by Professor Masamichi Royama, one of the leading Japanese authorities on political theory, and it was directed at the Socialist Party, which had gone on record a few days before as believing "American imperialism" to be the source of world tensions. The article was entitled: "An Appeal to the Conscience of the Socialist Party." It lamented the polarization of Japanese politics and put the principal blame for this state of affairs on the Socialists:

"It goes without saying that the governing Liberal Democratic Party, however large its majority, cannot by itself maintain the parliament which is the root and trunk of the democratic political order. More important are the presence and the activities of a responsible opposition party. In Japanese parliamentary politics the root and the branches have not yet been firmly established. An important reason is that the foreign policy of the Socialist Party is indistinguishable from that of the anti-parliamentary Communist Party, and therefore wholly out of accord with that of the Liberal Democratic Party. The heart of the conflict is, of course, policy toward Communist China. In the long state of cold war between the two worlds, the great task before every nation is to see its way through the crisis by somehow maintaining a non-partisan foreign policy. In Japan there is no sign of that endeavor—indeed one wonders if there is even any sense of its necessity."

Professor Royama's preoccupation with China policy has direct reference to a joint Sino-Japanese statement issued in Peking on January 13. The co-signers were Mosaburo Suzuki, head of a visiting delegation of Japanese Socialists and former chairman of the Japanese Socialist Party, and Chang Hsi-jo, chairman of the Chinese People's Foreign Policy Association. The document, subsequently approved by party headquarters in Tokyo, points up as few earlier documents have the polarization of Japanese politics. At least as far as foreign policy is concerned, one of the two major Japanese parties wants everything that the other one fears and dislikes. The heart of the matter is indeed policy towards China, and behind it, towards the Soviet Union.

A few pungent remarks from the Chang-Suzuki statement will serve to show how faithfully the Socialist Party has taken over the Communist view of the world. "American imperialism is the source of world tensions. It is stirring up tensions in Asia by allying itself with renascent Japanese imperialism and militarism. . . . American imperialism is resorting to intervention and suppression in its operations against the democratic racial movements of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, it has revived West German militarism in Europe, and it has organized a world-wide military bloc to threaten the security of the peoples of the whole world. . . . The Kennedy administration is suppressing democratic movements among the American people. Opposition to American imperialism is therefore the common struggle of the peoples of Japan and China, the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and the peoples of the whole world."

It will be seen that the Socialist Party of Japan is a maverick in the international Socialist movement, which does not share its willingness to turn to Peking for guidance and which declines to think of the world as torn by a struggle between "imperialistic monopoly capitalism" on the one hand and "Socialism" on the other. And the contrast with the governing Liberal Democratic Party is complete. Although the latter goes out of its way to avoid hostile statements about China of the sort the Socialists are always making about

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the United States, there is no doubt that on the whole it does not trust China. In theory its policy is based on cooperation with the United States, the United Nations, and the other nations of Asia, but Prime Minister Ikeda has made it clear since his talks with President Kennedy last year that in case of conflict the first of the three takes precedence.

In short the two major political forces in the country take diametrically opposite views on what sort of difficulties their country faces, who its friends are, and where it ought to be going. The violence of 1960 was the result of an attempt by one of the two sides to clarify the issue. If the polarization is as bad as it ever was, then, what are the prospects? Does it seem likely that the country will presently be torn again as it was then?

PREDICTION is very risky business in a country as flighty as Japan. Yet if it must be indulged in it can be fairly optimistic at the moment. Indeed there seem to be only two issues that anyone is much exercised about: the state of the economy and relations with Korea.

The balance of international payments has been in the red now for some months and is likely to be so for some months to come. The fact of a deficit in international payments does not, of course, directly affect the pocketbook of the individual voter; but a second by-product of economic growth does: inflation. The Japanese have had a decade of stable prices, long enough for them to think that prices ought in principle to be stable, and now prices are rising. Yet it is hard to imagine mobs taking over Tokyo because the price of the public bath has risen again or because another month has shown another drain on the gold reserve.

Korea is a trickier problem. The task of establishing diplomatic relations with South Korea introduces once again the great question: which side are the Japanese on in the great world struggle? The second world war has not ended between the Japanese and the Koreans, who are now engaged in their sixth attempt to reach some sort of settlement. Viewed from Korea, the prospects for success would appear to be good, since, for better or for worse, the issue was taken out of politics by the military coup of last year. On the Japanese side, the government is hesitant, and the Socialist opposition is violently hostile, holding that an agreement with South Korea would be a step toward a "Northeast Asia Treaty Organization" inspired by the American imperialists, and that it would impede Korean unification, the failure to attain which they blame, of course, on the American imperialists.

Asked whether they would want to have yet another tie with the Western system of alliances through South Korea, then, the Japanese might conceivably take fright and react as violently as they did in 1960. But it is by no means certain that they would. Since they already have normal diplomatic relations with Nationalist China, similar relations with South Korea would present nothing new in principle. Much would depend on how firmly the government acted.

Opponents of a Korean treaty would not have in the press as enthusiastic an ally as opponents of the revised Security Treaty had in 1960, when the biggest newspapers, through highly subjective and colored reporting, did their best to keep the anti-Treaty movement going. The papers have changed since 1960, and the most important of them, the *Asahi,* has changed the most markedly. Today the hot-blooded young reporter no longer has the opportunities he once had for shaping the news to his taste. Thus attempts to keep the "people's movement" of 1960 going in opposition to certain of the Prime Minister's policies in 1961 were not notably successful, and much of the credit may belong to the press which did not keep telling the movement how great it was going. Unless assured that they are about to become part of the largest crowd of demonstrators ever assembled on the face of the earth, Japanese, except the captive Left, tend to stay away. Why waste time on an ordinary, average crowd?

There is, too, a more important and complex reason for guarded optimism: it may be that the polarization of Japanese politics is not in fact as extreme as it was two years ago, despite the surface manifestations. In the 1960 elections the Socialist Party sought to play down both its earlier anti-American proclivities and a statement made in Peking the year before by its chairman to the effect that American imperialism was "the common enemy of China and Japan." Instead the Socialists proclaimed that they were the friends of everyone, Russian and Chinese and American alike. Further, late in 1960 the secretary-general of the party, Saburo Eda, introduced a new concept, "structural reform," into Socialist theory. Though deriving ultimately from Italian Communism, structural reform seems to imply that Socialists can work for immediate, piecemeal reforms and postpone "the Socialist revolution" to an unspecified time in the future—an important development, since the Socialists previously had trouble advocating anything at all, because revolution was the necessary preface to any sort of significant change.

IT WAS such hopes that the party might be changing which were somewhat jarred early this year both by the Chang-Suzuki statement from Peking and by the Socialist convention, which downgraded structural reform from the status of "strategy" to that of "tactics." This remarkable admission of opportunism amounts to a declaration that the policies of the Socialist Party still have more in common with Communism than they have with Socialism of the new European variety. Yet the secretary-general, Mr. Eda, who has been the chief proponent of structural reform, was re-elected over strong opposition from the party Left wing, and the gossip among journalists who ought to know is that this victory signals the emergence of a new generation to replace the tired old Marxists. If they are right in this analysis, the party will bear close watching in the months to come—which is not to say that it would not in any case, of course.

EDWARD SEIDENSTICKER

(Mr. Seidensticker, a frequent contributor, is a teacher and writer who lives in Japan.)

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More on Shared Time

LAST WEEK in this space I wrote about the "shared time" concept, which proposes the sharing of a child's time between the neutral public school and the religious school, at the discretion of the parent. I think the subject is important enough to return to again.

The first thing most people think of when they hear about the shared time idea is the practical difficulty in scheduling involved. But there are other and more fundamental issues at stake.

In one way, shared time is just common sense. It recognizes the fact that Americans do differ in their religious beliefs; it recognizes the rights of the parent in education, without ignoring the needs of the community as a whole; it stresses the notion that we Americans need as much unity as we can get without sacrificing essential differences.

In another way, though, shared time is a revolutionary plan. I presume there would always be some full-time religious schools. But if the shared-time plan were widely adopted, it would mean an end to the present situation in which millions of children go exclusively to religious schools while millions of other children go only to public schools. In this sense shared time would change the face of American education.

I think shared time deserves the most serious exploration, for two different reasons. First of all, I believe the idea has great merit in itself and that it might be made to work, despite the very real difficulties. Secondly, I believe consideration of the idea might make all concerned think hard about what they really want in education, and hard thinking on this point is badly needed.

Shared time should give proponents of parochial elementary and secondary school education a good chance to stop and reflect on what their goals are. Most of my own education, from first grade through graduate work, was spent under Catholic auspices. When I ponder the possibilities of shared time, I am not at all sure that I could not have got an education as good or better in all respects—including religion—under a shared time program.

Shared time would allow the public school to concentrate on academic excellence in the "neutral" aspect of many subjects, while permitting the religious school to supply the added dimension of the religious insight. Thus in practice, whatever the theory, shared time might mean a better integration of religion into all subjects than we now achieve.

Consideration of the shared time proposal might make us face certain other questions squarely. Are we really interested in all-around educational excellence in the elementary and secondary schools, or are we clinging to a narrowly conceived idea of "forming Christians" without too much worry about academic standards? On the high school level in particular, would we be satisfied with religious education that did not keep our children isolated from those who do not share our religious convictions? Are we interested in religious training or in keeping our children "safe" from a non-religious—not anti-religious—environment?

Less than half of the Catholic children in the U.S. are actually in religious schools and that percentage is declining. If we are feeling the pinch on parochial schools now, is there any reason to believe that things will get better in the years ahead? Is it sensible to concentrate the major part of our educational energies on a dwindling percentage of our children?

I don't think, though, that those devoted to parochial school education are the only ones who are confronted by hard questions in this matter. The shared time idea testifies to the fact that religion does have a place in education. It affirms the belief that while church and state are separate, our society has a stake in seeing that moral and religious values are in fact preserved, taught and passed on.

In my opinion, Protestants and Jews confront a greater problem in this matter of religious education than Catholics do—with the difference being that they do not yet realize it. Discussion of the shared time idea might make all of us face up to the fact that millions of American children are growing up with little or no education in the fundamentals of their religious heritage. The "unchurched" are all around us, and they make no contact with their religious roots either in the public school or in a parochial school.

Then, too, the idea of shared time might give pause to those who have always insisted that parochial schools are "divisive." Now they in turn can ask themselves some hard questions. Do they really object to parochial schools because they think they are "divisive"? Or do they simply wish that there were no differences between us, that we were all subscribers to some common kind of "American religion"?

In this connection I think particularly of the reaction of one Eastern school board member when the shared time idea was explained. "That's impossible," he blurted, in horror. "The public schools are *our* schools." By which he meant, of course, that education in this country ought to continue to reflect a combination of secular thought and his own particular kind of non-dogmatic Protestantism, and that parentally approved experiments in other directions should be resisted tooth and nail. I think he is wrong, of course, dead wrong, but Catholic withdrawal is hardly the way to prove the point.

JAMES O'GARA

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Integration should take place in Catholic schools not later than or even simultaneously with but before the action is accomplished by the public schools.

Integrating Parochial Schools in the South

BENJAMIN MUSE

IN CONSIDERING the question of integrating parochial schools in the South, two major differences between the parochial schools and the public schools are immediately obvious. First, the public schools (except in the Archdiocese of New Orleans) serve a vastly greater number of pupils than the parochial schools; second, Negroes represent a much higher percentage of the total enrollment in public than in parochial schools. The massive dimensions of the public school problem have in themselves a bearing upon the desegregation procedures which would have to be followed. The problem of a few closely-knit parochial schools is obviously simpler.

The large element of Negroes in the total public school enrollment, a majority in some counties, leads to inordinate fear on the part of many white Southerners of "mass" integration. However, I do not think a massive influx of Negroes into mixed schools is in prospect under any circumstances in the foreseeable future. For legally correct and morally proper reasons I do not expect that Negroes will be rushing to schools with white children. Still, the fear of "mass" integration is there, and it is a major obstacle to compliance with the Supreme Court's desegregation rulings. Any such fear is, however, of relatively little concern to the parochial schools with their tiny minorities of Negro pupils, although some fears of "mass" integration might have to be allayed in New Orleans.

There are other factors aiding the parochial school administrator which are denied to the administrator of public schools in regard to the problem of integration. One is the relative freedom of parochial schools from political scrutiny, controversy and interference. Much of the public agitation and race feeling which has impeded public school integration has been incited by politicians. Furthermore, the parochial school, under diocesan control, is able to encourage tolerance and interracial understanding in a manner which is forbidden in most public schools. In many areas a public school teacher who would dare to teach integration or interracial brotherhood, or even to urge orderly acceptance of the law of the land, would be in danger of public reprimand or dismissal. The close relationship between the parish church and the parochial school is another favorable circumstance. The priest speaks directly to the parents and children affected, both at Mass and in his visitations.

I STRESS the advantages of the parochial school administrator over the public school administrator in the face of this challenge because there are grave reasons why the adjustment should take place in Catholic parochial schools not later than or even simultaneously with, but *before* the action is taken by public schools. To announce that parochial schools will be desegregated "not later than the desegregation of the public schools" is an abdication not without a tinge of shame. It makes a step dictated by conscience and Christian doctrine contingent upon an act of governmental compulsion.

From the standpoint of the public interest, parochial school integration in the South would be beneficial in its effect upon attitudes toward public school desegregation. The integration of parochial schools illuminates the moral principle and can serve to some extent as a

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BENJAMIN MUSE is a former Virginia State Senator and is now Director of the Southern leadership project of the Southern Regional Council. This article is based on a report he recently prepared for the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice.

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pilot operation for the public schools which follow them. It can help in smoothing the broad path of a great and inevitable social change. Catholics can take pride in the record of the Diocese of Richmond, which announced parochial school desegregation before the Supreme Court decision in 1954 and put it into effect the following September. This demonstration of orderly adjustment in parochial schools helped condition the public for Virginia's later abandonment of massive resistance to public school desegregation.

IN THEIR piecemeal integration, those public school districts which have acted have followed a variety of plans: one-grade-a-year from the bottom up; one-grade-a-year from the top down; several grades at a time; or the admission of a small number of Negroes to formerly all white schools without any overall plan. Even when the desegregation of an entire grade is announced, the number of Negro applicants for transfer is generally scaled down to a ludicrous minimum through a series of screening devices.

In some of the instances of extensive integration, notably in Louisville and Nashville, the transition has been softened by an arrangement by which pupils of the minority race in a school are permitted to transfer to another school. In Nashville, which is beginning the fifth year in its one-grade-a-year plan, practically all white children transfer when they find themselves assigned to a school which is predominantly Negro; many Negro pupils have also opted for transfer to predominantly Negro schools. In Louisville, where the school board followed a plan of desegregation everywhere at once, with sensational success, the parents of forty-five per cent of the Negro children assigned to what had been white schools and the parents of eighty-five per cent of the white children assigned to what had been Negro schools requested transfer. The purpose of this arrangement is to permit compliance with the wishes of school patrons as far as is compatible with good faith desegregation. Such a system, of positive assignment with later adjustment by voluntary transfer, has the advantage of making desegregation effective without forcing the Negro pupil to take the onerous initiative of applying for admission in each case, while at the same time permitting those Negroes who prefer a predominantly Negro school to stay in one.

This transfer arrangement would probably have little value in most parochial school situations. Parochial school administrators are better able to determine informally what Negroes might prefer to stay in predominantly Negro schools. And in dealing with white pupils in parochial schools it might be a mistake, starting a train of difficulties, to cater to prejudice by allowing any white pupil to transfer from a school merely because of the presence of Negro pupils in it. At the same time it would seem to be a measure of justifiable prudence to avoid as far as practicable placing only a handful of white pupils in a predominantly Negro school.

The point which the transfer system emphasizes obviously, is that many Negroes at this stage do not want to attend school with whites. I think many whites who fear "mass" integration miss this point, which is an important factor militating against wholesale integration. I think practically all Negroes want the right to be assigned to schools without regard to race, and many, vastly more than are now being admitted to white schools, would ask for this privilege now. But I do not think there is any moral or legal duty to place a Negro in an integrated school against his will.

This attitude on the part of many Negroes applies, of course, to the parochial school problem, and, I think, lightens it. In situations where the status quo is sincerely preferred by Negro pupils, no wrong is done by leaving them undisturbed. It is, nevertheless, necessary to abolish the criterion of race and accord Negro children precisely the same privilege as white children, similarly situated and similarly qualified, to attend the parochial schools which they prefer.

Mention of parental or pupil choice brings us, incidentally, to the question of the pupil's qualifications to attend the school of his choice. Half a dozen states and some public school districts have set up pupil placement plans ostensibly to test the qualifications of the student applying for admission or transfer (though intended in most cases to prevent Negroes from entering white schools). The principle of examining prospective pupils to determine their qualifications is of course sound, and has been upheld by Federal courts—provided the same tests are applied to white children.

It is unquestionably true, moreover, that the average of Negro scholastic achievement in most Southern states is several years behind that of white pupils of the same age, though the few Negro pupils applying for admission to white schools are generally well above the average. Sweeping integration would involve serious problems of adjustment apart from the question of race prejudice.

THE DISTRICT of Columbia met this problem of differences in scholastic achievement by adopting its somewhat famous "four-track plan." Under this plan pupils are divided into four separate "tracks" according to talent and achievement. Though the plan was adopted in the first instance to cope with the sudden amalgamation of relatively retarded Negro pupils with more advanced white pupils, it also provides a mechanism for adjusting to inevitable differences in pupil capabilities regardless of race. Some Negro pupils were found qualified for the highest tracks and some white pupils were relegated to the lowest.

Discussing the "track" system, the principal of a

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Southern high school once said to me: "We have always had a 'track' system. We just don't call it that." He meant merely that his teachers found ways informally to separate the backward students from the more promising and see that the latter were not held back by the former. Similarly, it would seem that informal means can be found for dealing with a small minority of initially retarded Negro children in a predominantly white parochial school. In the rare instances where Negroes might form a majority, or a substantial part of the student body, something like the "track" system might be indicated. In a few years the differences, insofar as they are identified with race, could be expected to disappear.

In the matter of timing desegregation, two questions are raised. One is: Should integration be gradual, that is, for instance, one grade at a time, or one school at a time? The other is: How much time should be allowed for preparation before integration begins?

Gradualism has a widespread but I think deceptive appeal in this context. We are dealing here with a very unusual social phenomenon. From a purely practical point of view, there is little to be gained by delay either for the sake of a gradual schedule or to permit a period of so-called preparation.

The grade-by-grade plan, for instance, has the disadvantage in some cases of separating brothers and sisters. Often a fourth-grade girl is in the habit of accompanying her first-grade younger brother to school. If the first-grader is integrated ahead of her, the necessity for getting the little brother to school may impose a certain hardship; it may also require an extra stop for a school bus.

If anything in the way of disorderly segregationist protest is feared, dispersal of the operation over the entire school system is preferable to singling out a single school around which the disgruntled might congregate. In any case, I believe there is less likelihood of serious protest in a parish if all schools are integrated simultaneously; then the white patrons of one school are not able to ask: "Why are we obliged to have integration when others are not?"

The idea of following a long program of preparing children and parents for school integration also has a specious appeal. Surely, the doctrine of Christian brotherhood as it applies to people of different races should be preached often in Southern parishes and taught in parochial schools. The fallacy of the theory of innate Negro inferiority and the cruel injustices which it causes should be pointed out. The blasphemous myth that God has condemned the Negro race to a condition of servitude should be demolished wherever a vestige of it is still found. We should endeavor to remove race prejudice from the hearts of men. But that is a duty which will remain with us for long years to come.

Segregation, however, must go much sooner than that. If segregation is a *result* of race prejudice, it is even more a *cause* of race prejudice. All the intellectual preparation that can be given is not equal to actual association with attractive Negroes as an antidote to prejudice. The presence of a few Negroes in white schools does more to explode myths and allay fear and hysteria than could be accomplished by any possible program of indoctrination.

EXPERIENCE in public schools has proven abundantly that the best way to desegregate is simply to desegregate. A degree of bold resolution in this area is actually the course of prudence, since actual desegregation marks more often the end than the beginning of serious trouble. The aftermath of desegregation is always anti-climactic. The presence of a few Negroes in formerly all-white schools soon ceases to attract attention. Opposition simmers down.

I do not think parochial schools should move surreptitiously. A dignified public announcement of coming desegregation should be made. But care should be taken otherwise to keep publicity to a minimum. Elaborate "preparation" may cause harmful publicity. It tends to magnify the difficulty, and may even be taken as a kind of challenge to hostile elements in and out of the Church.

Some quiet preparation is in order, of course, of a kind which the school administrator will know best how to make. Private conversation with some dissident parishioners will doubtless help. As far as possible, though, integration should be anticipated and carried out in a spirit of matter-of-fact routine. This is not only good tactics; it is, after all, exactly how Catholics should regard the matter.

February Night

Why should even snow,
light as nothing, white
as nothing's cover,
fall? Nothing need be:
prints or frozen breath
or plans for summer
or mere snow that mars
black simplicity;
every feather chars
the cold black body
of nothing, with soot
of His white arson;
what can love or genius,
brain or honeycomb, prove
more than these white scars,
our living remove?

ROBERT BEUM

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Birch Bark, Birch Bite

HENRY S. REUSS

THE AVERAGE American of good will and reasonable brain regards the John Birch Society and its various sapling associates with mixed feelings. On the one hand, some of its statements are so outrageous that they are difficult to accept as being seriously made at all. During the McCarthy hearings an elaborate case could have been made demonstrating that President Eisenhower himself was not only a tool of the Communists but an old card-carrier himself. But the one making such a case would have had to have been a Mort Sahl broadly burlesquing the dialectic of the far right.

Within the last year or so, such charges have been made not by satirists but by the far right itself. This illustrates the professional difficulties of the satirist in our times: no matter how far out he goes, someone will always go further and with a completely dead-pan expression.

On the other hand, the reasonable American may reasonably note, the kind of political menace the Birchers represent, if they represent a menace at all, has never been weakened by being logically ludicrous. The public papers of Adolf Hitler are full of fallacies apparent to any freshman student of logic, with whole sequences of *non sequiturs* and innumerable *post hoc ergo propter hocs*. Yet that illogician conquered Europe and for three years held together an empire bigger than Napoleon's.

The self-contradictions of the far right are equally glaring. Their program for government can be summed up in three points: 1) get the U.S. out of all entangling alliances; 2) cut government spending drastically, including military expenditure since this is so large a part of the whole; and 3) take decisive action, not talk, against atheistic Russia and materialistic China. Translated into reality, this program means: get rid of our allies, cripple our defense establishment, and then go to war with half the world.

But evident self-contradiction is totally irrelevant to the question of the menace of Birchism. For myself, I believe that the Birchers and their friends once did offer a threat to America. I believe the moment of their opportunity has passed without their being able to seize it. I believe that such a moment will not likely come again in the active lifetime of those now making blunders on the right.

There are, in the first place, four characteristics, or assets, needed by such a movement for it to be in a position even to try for power. The recent far right—since, say, the end of World War II—has never had the four all at the same time. The four are: a set of hysterical ideas; efficient organization and nearly limitless funds; an effective demagogue to put the ideas across and to use and be used by the organization; and, finally, a program of economic leftism.

The last note may surprise some, but it is not only historically true—the name of Hitler's party included the word "Socialist," the Communist empire is officially "for" peasants and proletariat—it is also a practical necessity: substantial numbers of voters just do not get worked up over the tax injustice theoretically done to those in the ninety per cent bracket. They can, on the other hand, get worked up over economic injustice done to themselves, and they can get emotionally involved with the prospect of their own picking up a larger share of the grab bag known as the Gross National Product. But once you talk about economic injustice to large numbers or about broadened economic opportunity for large numbers, you are already economically "left."

AT THIS late date it should not really surprise anyone that the political spectrum is circular: extreme right and extreme left meet and mingle. President Kennedy has pointed out that social security was largely originated by that old left-winger, Otto von Bismarck. The rightist necessity for a measure of leftist economics has also been recognized by earlier American demagogues, but not, as yet, by the recent right.

Before World War II both Father Coughlin and Huey Long talked incessantly about social justice and sharing the wealth. Whatever those words meant, they were clearly leftist economics. The Birchers, and those who are not members of the society but wish that millions of Americans were, have not yet tumbled to the need to be left in order to go right. This has been their main technical lack to date. In Joseph McCarthy, they lost their best bet in demagoguery. The interminable Robert Welch and the free-speaking, civilian-model General Walker don't begin to fill the gap.

What the recent right has always had is a set of hysterical ideas and, apparently, ample funds and the nucleus of an organization. These in themselves are enough to attract an effective demagogue and sooner or later a serious and effective demagogue realizes the

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need of the fourth of the magic ingredients, Leftward Ho economics. So throughout the years since World War II, the radical right has been hovering over our country like an accident waiting to happen, or like the raw material of spontaneous combustion waiting for the explosion.

The spark didn't come when it could have. I believe that now it is too late. For the successful political enterprise of the radical right not only requires the four characteristics I have listed. It also requires an opportunity. I believe that opportunity existed in the '50s, specifically during the eight years of the Eisenhower administration. I believe that President Kennedy has foreclosed on that opportunity for the radical right.

That sounds partisan and I am myself a member of the President's party and within that party a member of the progressive wing with which he is identified. I should therefore explain that it is not really a partisan question whether—at least in theory—a Democratic President could have offered as great an opportunity for the rightists as I think President Eisenhower did offer. I believe—again in theory—that a Republican President could have foreclosed on that opportunity as forthrightly as President Kennedy has.

By this foreclosure of rightist opportunity, I do not mean anything merely verbal such as the President's recent denunciation of the radical right—a denunciation in which he was shortly joined by President Eisenhower and by Mr. Nixon. It is significant, I think, that President Eisenhower did not publicly acknowledge the threat of the radical right until his successor had done so; the former President certainly did nothing of the kind while he was himself in office. It is also significant that Mr. Nixon joined the rising chorus of rightist repudiation only between campaigns, not while there were votes or party contributions to be alienated. At any rate the major spokesmen of both parties are now on record as rating the Birchers as something between, or combining, an un-American threat and an un-funny joke.

PRESIDENT Kennedy's foreclosure of rightist opportunity has come about chiefly by his filling the vacuum of power that President Eisenhower seemingly felt it his duty to create and maintain. Such emptiness of purpose at the heart of the government of the United States in the second half of the 20th century incites action by the radical right. Thomas Jefferson observed, "That government is best which governs least." He was speaking, however, in the context of existing eighteenth century absolutism, specifically of eighteenth century British absolutism. To attempt, literally, to apply that maxim to the affairs of today's America indicates not a praiseworthy piety toward the Founders of the Republic, but only that the maxim-quoter doesn't quite realize what century he's in.

President Kennedy does know the century, the decade, the year. He has a sense of purpose and he has by now learned that the pursuit of purpose takes more than rhetoric; it takes the use of power. That's one change.

His foreclosure of rightist opportunity has also been forwarded immensely by his frank recognition that we live in an exceedingly complicated world. In such a world, for example, America's attitude and action toward the European Common Market cannot be determined either by the slogan of One World or by the slogan of Avoid Foreign Entanglements, but must be prudently found with many considerations, in many different categories, always in mind.

From his 1960 campaign to the present, the President has never hesitated to insist on complexity, on the difficulty of making "judgments," and on the hard facts of international relations. This has been an enormous blow against support for Birchism. The whole mystique of the radical right—like that of the radical left—is based on the alluring notion of simplicity: one easy solution to all problems. You don't have to think; you have only to repeat the magic words.

Now President Eisenhower in his every speech, his every press conference, his every public appearance, smiling and arms aloft, gave the impression, sometimes explicitly, always implicitly, that the political simplistes were correct. Nothing was very complicated. Nothing would not yield to cheerful confidence.

ONE OF the major virtues of President Kennedy is the fact that he looks worried from time to time. He ought to. He has plenty to worry about. The fact that he has been able to communicate the reasons for his worry to an increasing number of Americans is a strong sign of hope for this country and the free world in the '60s. And it is also, of course, a death blow to the political simplicity of the radical right.

I think it was Joe E. Lewis who said, "If you can keep your head when all about are losing theirs, maybe you don't understand the situation." This was precisely the trouble with the Eisenhower Administration in the

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face of the rise of the Birchers. It wasn't so much that the total direction of that Administration was in such simpliste hands. It never was. But invariably the communications of that Administration to the people gave the simpliste impression of world affairs and America's place in them. And if simplicity was to be the mode of government, why the Birchers had a simplicity even more absolute.

With President Kennedy, the people are getting exposed to complexity. Once grasped, it never permits a return to intellectual innocence. The radical right recruits its members and its leadership either from the political innocent or from those for whom political or intellectual innocence is merely a commodity.

The new Administration's final undercutting of the sources of Birch support comes from the fact that it is a fighting Administration, and America traditionally admires political fighters. This, too, was certainly part of the Birch appeal during the Eisenhower years. Nobody else around was in fighting stance. The radical right was, from proposals to invade mainland China to rallying cries to defy the U.S. income tax collector.

IF I may be forgiven a personal recollection, I represent the Wisconsin Congressional district I was born in, and I picked up some early political lumps opposing Senator Joseph R. McCarthy. But McCarthy wasn't the first Wisconsin Senator to attract national admiration, and I am old enough to remember another one, Senator LaFollette. In program—insofar as McCarthy ever had a program—and in political integrity the two Senators from my state were poles apart. But both won the political allegiance of the majority of voters in Wisconsin and both acquired an enthusiastic national following.

Why? Had Wisconsin changed so much between LaFollette's death in the mid-twenties and McCarthy's emergence two decades later? I don't believe it. I believe much of the support came not only from the same population but even from the same attitudes in the population. I think the key is in their nicknames. LaFollette to the day he died was "Fighting Bob." McCarthy in all the literature of the radical right is still referred to as "Fighting Joe."

Both took an aggressive, fighting stance in the political arena. To many voters both seemed fearlessly to be opposing enormous and myterious powers, yet both attained what were regarded as significant victories.

The last thing I wish to suggest is that the two men were variations on a common theme, or that what you are fighting for or against makes no difference so long as the guard is up, the leading fist prominently displayed. I do suggest Americans like a fighter. I do suggest that, deplore it as we may, President Truman's victory in 1948 was less a tribute to the most remarkable feat of political self-education in modern times than a tribute to a cocky, courageous political fighter who refused to surrender. I do suggest that when the Eisenhower "Crusade" of 1952 evaporated in late January of 1953, the American taste for a fighter found others available, especially on the radical right.

President Kennedy appeals to that taste and this is all to the good. He is not exploiting that taste. He is educating it. Americans with their country's traditional taste for a fighter have one to follow, one from the PT boats, and the West Virginia primary, and the Houston Ministerial Council. Americans once more have things to take pride in—the Peace Corps, or our move through free trade to a free world community.

At home and abroad these are times for a fighting spirit. If a large segment of the American fighting spirit can be educated to be allied with its government in action against our vast and common problems, the change will be so enormous that the death of Birchism, from malnutrition, will hardly be noticed.

Well Washed

Well washed
(Amazing what a dark child I was)
And now, I glitter
Like three candelabrums.

And nicely combed—
One would think I was going
To a wedding
Or
To my own Bar Mitzvah.

Even my fingernails
Are clean as my mother's
Bread board
On the night before Passover.

I can still smell the soap
In my ears
And everyone is waiting for me.

But I won't go.

The friends and the gathered ones
Wait for me.
I have never been so clean before.
But I know
That when I am seen coming in,
Everyone,
(My father first,
And later my grandmother, my grandfather,
The rabbi
And Uncle Morris)
Will start to cry.

LEONARD WOLF

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"The Future of Education"

New York, N.Y.

TO THE EDITORS: An author puts himself in a rather grotesque situation when he protests against adverse criticism of his book. Yet I feel I must make an exception and answer Mr. McDermott's review of *The Future of Education* [Jan. 12] because he does not so much *criticize* as *talk down* to me. And since in this case I do not recognize the heights, I refuse to accept my position as inferior.

Mr. McDermott has recourse to an unfair argument when he implies that I, not a native but a naturalized American, do not know enough of our education which must be "understood within the framework of indigenous political and sociological realities." But how would he explain that native Americans like Arthur Bestor, Russell Kirk, Albert Lynd, Admiral Rickover, Mortimer Smith, Douglas Bush, to mention only some of those whom the National Educational Association, probably with an occasional echo from Mr. McDermott, calls "self-appointed critics" of American education, come to conclusions similar to mine? Or is "self-appointed critic" perhaps a synonym for "non-native citizen"?

Mr. McDermott then proceeds to give me a lesson in philosophy. I agree with him that in my chapter on "Permanence and Change" I do not delve into a "close analysis of the serious question of values and historical process"; but I intended to write a book on education, and thus wanted to philosophize only to the extent that was strictly relevant to my proposition: namely, to show the shoddy and demagogic use of the concept of "change" and "dynamism," in the name of which our schools are adjusted to the needs of democracy, scientific revolution, mental health, space age, and what have you.

On the contrary, I advocate learning pursued in institutions devoted exclusively to academic ends and not diluted by frills, extracurricular activities, psychological counseling and myriads of other "services." My tendentious critic settles the issue with the remark (intended, no doubt, to show what a greenhorn I am on these shores) that "in America most artificial societies are barren." Stop. *Ipse dixit.*

Finally, after denouncing my "popular exposition of the state of contemporary education," Mr. McDermott proposes to administer the *coup de grace* with a lengthy and naturally vacuous quotation from John Dewey in which the Master advises us that "nothing but the best, the richest and fullest experience possible is good enough for man." If for Mr. McDermott this advertisement copy represents philosophy, then I prefer, indeed, to be denounced by him as an anti-philosopher.

THOMAS MOLNAR

The Author Replies

Huntington, N.Y.

TO THE EDITORS: So far as I am concerned, Mr. Molnar's letter does not meet the objections of my book review. Indeed, it continues the same strident tone, while again failing to throw light on the difficult problems that accompany any serious attempt to criticize our educational system without finding it necessary to jettison those values and perspectives in our tradition that are still profoundly meaningful. I repeat my review statement that a critique is indeed needed, but this fact in no way guarantees the significance of those offered. One of the difficulties of the present time is that those who are most critical of our institutions seem to be the least informed as to their genesis and their overall intentions.

Now as to the problem of nativism, this results from a gratuitous inference on the part of Mr. Molnar. Having read some of his previous essays on European thought, I felt that he might have been more successful with an analysis of European education. Mr. Molnar's place of birth was simply not a factor in my evaluation of his book. But a very prominent factor was my concern about the obligation to speak from an informed and incisive frame of reference, however begotten, when issuing a polemical study on as critical a topic as contemporary education.

Mr. Molnar does little to convince the reader of this seriousness of purpose and preparation, when on page 95 he writes that, "Hordes of young men and women—products of universal compulsory education—roam the streets of our big cities, and with the inner void reflected on their blank expressionless faces, they explode in the madness of silent destruction," or when on page 123, in speaking of Huxley's *Brave New World,* he claims that, "What with tranquilizers and psychology (chemically cleaner and far more reliable) one might say that we have already arrived." And while we should condemn any cheap version of adjustment, it comes as somewhat of a blow to have Mr. Molnar rule out the educational significance of the "needs of democracy, scientific revolution, mental health (and the) space age." They would, I think, constitute educational problems of the highest order.

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If we could get past this interpersonal bind in which Mr. Molnar has chosen to strap us, genuine problems would emerge. I think that we must retain our commitment to the organic relationship of school and community, the education of the total society and the use of criteria drawn from experience as the source of evaluation in those disciplines requiring value-judgments. In such a framework, however, we must revamp our curricula so as to guard against a political and social provincialism, as well as provide a realistic setting, particularly in our secondary schools, for meeting obligations placed upon our society by contemporary science and technology. While Dewey's view is seminal, it is by no means adequate. But the direction to be taken is incomparably more demanding than that offered by Mr. Molnar and the camp which he has, alas, chosen to represent.

JOHN J. MCDERMOTT

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THE SCREEN

Forests of the Night

AUDIENCES who saw "L'Avventura," Michelangelo Antonioni's poetically-photographed and fascinating study of modern society, will soon realize as they watch his new film that it is more of the same. For me it is too much more, and even some of my enthusiasm for "L'Avventura," with its beautiful and barren Sicilian scenes so fitting to a story of moral bankruptcy, diminished a little when its excesses were carried to extreme in "The Night." With a few slight changes in characterizations and occupations, "The Night" (written by Antonioni and a couple of scriptwriters, one of whom also had a hand in "L'Avventura") could be considered a sequel to the earlier movie. The young couple in that film, who wandered in and out of romantic affairs like others in the decadent society around them and ended in a stalemate, could well be the married couple in "The Night."

Once again they have hit a stalemate. The wife, played with her usual petulant listlessness and turned-down mouth by Jeanne Moreau, is bored; the husband, a successful writer played by Marcello Mastroianni, who allows a little enthusiasm to filter through his ennui, is world-weary. Both realize their love for each other is slipping away, and the day and night in this *Ulysses* describes their misdirected efforts to regain it.

They visit a dying friend, a former lover of the wife, in a hospital; there the husband is almost seduced by a bed-ridden nymphomaniac. They go to a reception in honor of the husband's new book, but the wife, weary of all the pseudo-sophistication and adulation of her husband, leaves to wander around the city (Milan) and is finally picked up by the husband in a neighborhood once familiar to them both. They go to a nightclub and watch an erotic dance that is as pornographic as the movies ever get. They finally go to a large, lush, high-society party at the estate of a millionaire industrialist who hopes the husband will work for him. The husband refuses, but shows more than a passing interest in the host's restless young daughter (Monica Vitti), while the wife in turn teams up with a handsome young fellow. Nothing comes of these diversions—except further boredom. And as the husband and wife leave together at dawn, they stop to grapple on the lawn in one last, half-desperate attempt at venery—as if to rewaken their dead love, or at least make the best of what they have with each other.

If this Italian film weren't so well made, it would be hard to take it seriously. But Antonioni knows where he is going, and each step in the odyssey taken by this husband and wife is carefully planned, perhaps too carefully, as if Antonioni were not so much interested in his two leading characters as he is in displaying the

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pitfalls in today's depraved society that lead to futility, frustration, and acceptance without a struggle. Since "The Night" lacks the mysticism and beauty of "L'Avventura," it becomes at times a tasteless and grotesque exercise. Antonioni may succeed in making his audiences think, but if he believes there is any hope in this dark world and wide, the long "Night" leaves them looking for it in vain. PHILIP T. HARTUNG

OF NOTE

Can the Council Fail?

ALTHOUGH MANY have written about the coming Second Vatican Council, few have done so as perceptively as Father Hans Küng of the University of Tübingen, Germany. An American edition of his widely acclaimed book, *The Council, Reform and Reunion,* will be published shortly by Sheed and Ward. In a recent article in the *Rheinischer Merkur* which is entitled "Can the Council Fail?", Father Küng returned to the subject of his book. The following excerpt from that article, translated by Father G. Watson, appeared in the Irish monthly *The Furrow* (St. Patrick's College, Maynooth. $4.50):

Everyone who takes on a public role in the interests of the coming Council feels, time and again, how great on the one hand are the expectations which have been awakened by the announcement of the Second Vatican Council and how small on the other is the certainty that these great expectations will be fulfilled. It is easy to see how much the original interest of many Catholic and Evangelical Protestant Christians in the Council has dwindled and how far a deep scepticism has spread even among theologians and the educated classes.

This is not just the result of a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of an "ecumenical" Council, which is not meant to be an assembly of all the Churches, but of the Roman Catholic Church. Nor is it to be explained merely by saying that, outside our own Church, too little attention is paid to this ecumenical complexion of the coming Council, which will prevent it from becoming simply "an internal Catholic concern." But it is connected very definitely with the doubt whether, in the error and confusion of the present day, the Council will take the decisive steps which the need of the Church in this hour of the world's history demands.

In other words, no one inside or outside the Church has any reservations about the good intention of the Pope whose action, so rich in consequences, will in any case be regarded as epoch-making in Church history. Nor does anyone doubt the good will of those who are making the preparations for the Council, among whom are some outstanding men who are certainly taking the greatest pains, and by hard and selfless work doing their utmost to ensure the proper preparation of this assembly. But various other facts have given much more cause to doubt whether the Council, for all the good intentions and all the good will and all the hard work will have the hoped-for real success.

In this context the following points are often brought forward for serious consideration: the Roman Diocesan Synod, which left no room for free discussion and made no energetic reforms; then, in certain Roman circles (not all of course), the lack of ecumenical outlook, Catholic openness and practical readiness for an exchange of views; the way reunion as the ultimately determined goal of the Council is pushed into the background at Vatican press conferences; the unusually high average age of the cardinals of the Curia, the uneven representation of territorial bishoprics (for example, about 290 Italian bishops and 26 Germans); the rejection of a system of simultaneous translation in favor of Latin; the badly working Press Secretariat; the efforts of certain Roman circles against the Papal Biblical Institute and various well-known Catholic exegetes and so on. One can not only hear these things said time and again in private conversations and discussions, but can also read them in the press.

What is the believing Christian to do in the face of this scepticism? In particular what is the parish priest or professor, the journalist or lecturer to do, who has to express himself responsibly on the questions of the Council (and it would be a good thing if more of it were done)? Two ways are possible.

The first is the way of facile apologetic: you deal with difficulties point by point, making distinctions in each with a "Quite true, of course,—but you see." And, while you are at it, you repeat some point which no one doubts is correct, but irrevelant, and come finally to the soothing conclusion that things are not so depressing. Indeed the really depressing people are those who presented things in such a depressing light. What is the success of this way? People who read only the conformist press, and even that not very thoroughly, are comforted and find fresh confirmation for their view that everything in the Church of God can and will go on like this in peace.

But men who think of the need of the age and follow the Church with watchful eyes find this way at best a well-meaning type of apologetic, but at the present moment most inopportune, merely glossing over difficulties. They are disappointed by the answer, lose hope that among our Church leaders the problems are seen for what they are, and in their own minds they write off the coming Council. In particular, such Christians get the impression from the theologian who follows this way that essentially he has not learned

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very much either theologically or practically since the First Vatican Council—in spite of the enormous need of the world and of Christendom. And that in these circumstances the Council for reunion will not issue in much more than fine words and invitations. And so it is that a facile apologetic of that kind causes either a comfortable or a defeatist inactivity.

The second way is that of honest consideration: in the interest of the Church and the Council black is here called black, gray gray, and white white, and no attempt is made (at least not in a lecture or article) to put a neat little patch over every difficulty—which in any case usually does not prove to be a real repair. In this second way the difficulties are acknowledged to be real ones, but the accent is laid much more on the positive aspects of the Council's approach to problems:

1. The ecumenical outlook of the present Pope which gives comfort and strength to so many Christians, and his great program for the Council: "Through the renewal of the Catholic Church to the reunion of the separated Christians!"

2. The positive factors in the preparations for the Council: the changed ecumenical climate in the Universal Church through the initiative of the Pope; the setting up of the Roman "Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity" under the outstanding leadership of Cardinal Bea; the basic linking of reunion with the self-reform of our own Church, and so on.

3. The positive possibilities of realizing the Council's program: both in principle and in practice.

In this way can scepticism and defeatism be countered and even with the necessary realism can hope and courage be strengthened. Such an honest consideration is a call to action in the service of the Council's aims.

What the Church of today needs is, first of all, honesty—honesty in the appraisal, free of all illusion, of the situation of our own Church and of the others; and in the second place courage—courage to speak out, *opportune importune*, what the situation demands in the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ, even at the great risk of making oneself unpopular; and finally, a readiness for action—a readiness for unceasing work in the place to which the Lord God has assigned one, for the realization of the goal of the Council.

BOOKS

Uncle Sam in the Eyes of Latin Americans

The Shark and The Sardines. By José Arevalo. Lyle Stuart. $4.95.
Social Change in Latin America Today. By Richard N. Adams, John P. Gillin, and others. Vintage Books. $1.45.

Lawrence T. King

JUAN JOSE AREVALO was elected president of Guatemala in 1944, after a revolt ended the thirteen-year rule of the dictatorial Jorge Ubico. He served to 1951, when he was succeeded by Jacobo Arbenz, who established the first Communist government in the Western Hemisphere. Before entering political life, Sr. Arevalo had achieved some measure of fame throughout Latin America as an educator, principally for his production of a Spanish equivalent of the *McGuffey Reader*.

In *The Shark and the Sardines* he has written a tirade against what he terms "U.S. imperialism" in Latin America. The shark, of course, is the United States and the sardines are the twenty republics to the south. Since it is the natural function of the shark to devour the sardine, Sr. Arevalo maintains that treaties between the two are a farce and that the Pan-American system, set up to foster hemispheric cooperation, is merely a ruse to keep other sharks away.

The record of U.S. dollar diplomacy gives the author a strong talking point, and it is fully exploited to support the thesis that the State Department is the captive of Wall Street capitalists determined to keep Latin America in a perpetual state of vassalage. This may have been true at one time—and few North Americans would argue with Sr. Arevalo about it—but to assess our recent diplomacy strictly in economic terms, which the author does, is to ignore the continuing development of American political and economic policy and, more grievously, the world-wide ideological struggle being waged between representative political democracy and totalitarianism.

In his introduction to the American edition, Sr. Arevalo writes: "In our resistance to the businessman mentality, we are still Spanish, stubbornly Spanish. Also, we have not left off being Catholic nor have we left off being romantic and we cannot conceive of private life without love nor of public life without chivalry nor of our children's education without enlightening ideals . . . If you want to be our friends, you will have to accept us as we are. Do not attempt to remodel us after your image."

Our policy-makers would do well to ponder these words. At the same time, Latin Americans might just as profitably ask themselves whether the tradition which Sr. Arevalo defends in his introduction—although not in the original edition—can survive at all under the kind of government imposed by an Arbenz or a Castro. Sr. Arevalo's allegory would have been much more effective had he introduced a third character: a red-starred octopus. In this version the sardines, fearful of being swallowed by the shark, swim for protection into the friendly tentacles of the octopus from the East. Oh yes, they are devoured—one by one.

For the reader who desires

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deeper and more balanced study of the subject, *Social Change in Latin America Today,* subtitled "Its Implications for United States Policy," is a better investment. Sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations, the volume is an attempt by six social anthropologists to broaden our understanding of the cultural, social and economic forces at work in the lower hemisphere.

After an introductory essay on "Some Signposts for Policy," the studies deal with Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Guatemala and Mexico. Although each country is beset by its own peculiar and complex problems —which are described in some detail—it is the decline of the paternalistic hacienda system and the flight from the land to the burgeoning cities which have created a problem common to all of Latin America. The emergence of this vast, rootless substratum of society living in misery and despair has generated a powerful new political force highly susceptible to demagogues offering a convenient scapegoat and promising a ready panacea.

It is in this area that United States policy is most vulnerable. Moscow has a definite policy on social change complete with blueprints and "do-it-yourself" kits. Washington has none. Moreover, as Dr. Adams points out in his perceptive essay on Guatemala, our image abroad is often formed by the role of our business.

The question is not one of discouraging American investments in these countries but of convincing businessmen to adapt their ventures to local realities instead of using economic pressure—through official United States agencies—to force Latin Americans to do it the "North American way." The realities are convincingly explored in this 353-page paperback volume.

Critical Disorders

The Liberties of Wit. By Robert E. Lane. Yale University Press. $3.75.

by John P. Sisk

NOWADAYS the literary critic who cannot spell out the political assumptions and implications of a piece of literature risks a loss of prestige among his peers. Few of us, however, expect a political scientist to have even the minimal familiarity with literary criticism necessary for small talk in the faculty room—let alone the detailed knowledge that Professor Lane displays in this little book.

Professor Lane's concern is with literary criticism because it is an area in which it is easy for him to find illustration for the points he wants to make about the liberal arts generally. What interests him chiefly about literary criticism is "the ways of thinking it instills and encourages." He assumes that thinking habits "encouraged in one area of learning tend to be applied in another," and he is convinced that the college graduate's ability to think clearly as a citizen is affected by the way he learns to analyze and evaluate the poems, plays and novels he reads.

What he finds is that literary criticism is anything but a model discipline for the future citizen. The critic's world is torn metaphysically with idealist-nominalist and absolutist-relativist controversies; it lags far behind other disciplines in its attempts to work out a generally acceptable theory; classificatory systems run riot in it and are too often used to evade analysis, while hypotheses and principles are propounded in it without any attempt being made to verify them; there is little provision for keeping the literary court in order so that evaluation can be reached through due process; finally, it is impoverished by the "complete divorce between the study of language as literature and the study of language as a system of communication."

The Liberties of Wit is not the argument of a discipline-hopper who hopes to get by with a superficial glance at his subject. Professor Lane has obviously read the important critics with intelligence and enjoyment – particularly Frye, Richards, Empson, Brooks, Ransom, Tate, Winters, Wimsatt, Beardsley and Eliot. Indeed, he is able to quote them quite effectively in defense of his own position. The result is an assessment valuable even to those teachers and critics only peripherally concerned with the problems of the citizen.

The nature of Professor Lane's study makes his approach to literature a utilitarian one: he has not so much gotten into a new field as he has extended himself as a political scientist into an area where political scientists normally fear to tread. He is to be commended for his courage and thanked for the light he sheds—which is considerable, especially in the chapters on literary theory and verification. I am a bit uneasy, nevertheless, with the extent to which in his inevitable subordination of the study of literature to the needs of the community he recalls C. P. Snow's "Two Cultures" lecture. Are not both these writers basically convinced that something like a Unified Field Theory is as possible and desirable in literature as it is in science? In so far as they think this I believe that the literary critic is properly wary of them, whatever they have to tell him about the disorder of his house.

From Inside Out

Four Days. By John Buell. Farrar, Straus and Cudahy. $3.95.

by Thomas Curley

IT IS a violent half-week that Mr. Buell treats us to in this second novel. There are more deaths, all of them violent, than there are days in the title, and yet it is not a violent book. I recommend it enthusiastically to all those apostles of the genteel way who deplore violence in *Paladin* and sex in *Lolita.*

Four days: Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. But only one *character,* although there are other people in the story. Who is this character? He is male, twelve years old, the younger brother of Milt Landers, although the boy's father and Milt's father were probably different men. Milt is an ex-convict and a practicing criminal. He and the boy live above a pool room, and on the first of Mr. Buell's four days, the boy learns that he and Milt are about to progress from the pettiness of breaking into empty homes to the

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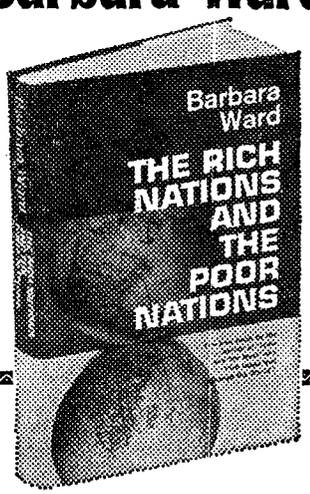

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big league of crime, bank robbery.

What I like about Buell is the way, with an artist's honesty, he stacks the cards against himself. Milt Landers is not only a criminal who *tends* to corrupt the boy who adulates him; he is also a panderer of the worst sort, with a sordid sexual life.

I emphasized "*tends*" above because Milt does not corrupt his brother, ". . . too young for real desire and not young enough to be indifferent," he was frightened by the circumstance of sex: ". . . serious, grim, intent, hostile, violent, wilder even than the animals; you could laugh maybe at animals, not at men and women."

To use the plain speech of educators, the boy is "culturally deprived." All he has is Milt, "a warm area at the heart of things that gave substance to existence." Well, Milt plans the bank robbery, and the boy is an important part of his plans. On the third of Mr. Buell's days, about noon on Monday, Milt and two other men enter a bank and take a large amount of cash. Outside, Milt hands the bag of bills to his brother and moves to make his get-away with a bag of worthless paper, but he and his two adult confederates are shot and killed. The boy sees Milt sitting on the sidewalk, leaning sideways against a parked car, and though one part of him knows his brother is dead or dying, he carries out his role in the plan by boarding a bus and traveling to a resort hotel where he was to meet Milt later.

I have summarized only about half of the novel, and have revealed none of its genuine merit. Let me quote a crucial passage—it occurs after the boy has arrived at the hotel. "Somewhere in the unfaced depths of his soul he realized quite clearly that he was trying to alter a fact [the fact of Milt's death] that would be a fact forever no matter what he willed or how strongly. But his whole person screamed with the effort to do it, it was his only hold or existence; and when the plan ran out and erased all traces of Milt his hold would go with it."

The passage suggests the boy's death, but we do not wait for that death. The reason we don't, I think is that Buell has accomplished a

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very difficult task; he has created the boy inside out. That inner life is so palpably and immediately before us that we do not ask what will happen; we are content to watch him for what he is. His life is not only poor in the cultural, social sense; it is also rich in innocence and loyalty to the only love he knows. If one were writing his epitaph, one might say this: he lived clean.

I have only one fault to find, and it may not be one at that. Every so often Buell shifts his focus from the boy to one of the people in the book: the detectives, one of the criminals, the priest the boy meets towards the end. Such shifts do give the reader a clearer knowledge of the events than the boy could have; they also serve to contrast his innocence with the stupidity and malice of the various criminals. Nevertheless, I wish he had stayed with the boy all the way through. Had he done so, some other critic would probably complain that he was indulging in a *tour de force.*

This is a valid book, honestly imagined and boldly executed. It is not sensational, and therefore could easily be neglected; I hope that it won't be.

ART

Rembrandt At the Metropolitan

THE PREVAILING tune of art argument in the U.S.A. (pro-versus anti-abstract) was suddenly stilled toward the end of 1961 by the clarion news that the Metropolitan Museum of N.Y. had bought a Rembrandt painting called *Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer,* at auction, for $2,300,000. In the face of this portentuous sum, a sort of awe spread over the art world, but after the initial hush, a hubbub of comment surged up that concorded by dwelling chiefly on the price of the picture.

Most commentators extolled the audacity of James J. Rorimer, director of the Metropolitan, for making the purchase, while a few niggling

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FICTION

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Hortense Calisher, *False Entry (Little, Brown)* / George P. Eliot, *Among the Dangs (Holt, Rinehart & Winston)* / Joseph Heller, *Catch-22 (Simon & Schuster)* / Bernard Malamud, *A New Life (Farrar, Straus & Cudahy)* / William Maxwell, *The Chateau (Knopf)* / Walker Percy, *The Movie Goer (Knopf)* / J. D. Salinger, *Franny and Zooey (Little, Brown)* / Isaac Singer, *The Spinoza of Market Street (Farrar, Straus & Cudahy)* / Edward Lewis Wallant, *The Pawnbroker (Harcourt, Brace & World)* / Joan Williams, *The Morning and the Evening (Atheneum)* / Richard Yates, *Revolutionary Road (Little, Brown)*

NON-FICTION

JUDGES LOREN EISELEY, AUGUST HECKSHER AND LOUIS B. WRIGHT ARE CONSIDERING:

Robert Ardrey, *African Genesis (Atheneum)* / James Baldwin, *Nobody Knows My Name (Dial)* / Stringfellow Barr, *The Will of Zeus (Lippincott)* / John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown, *The Architecture of America (Little, Brown)* / Rene Dubos, *The Dreams of Reason (Columbia)* / Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities (Random House)* / Oscar Lewis, *The Children of Sanchez (Random House)* / Lewis Mumford, *The City in History (Harcourt, Brace & World)* / Virgilia Peterson, *A Matter of Life and Death (Atheneum)* / Mark Schorer, *Sinclair Lewis: An American Life (McGraw-Hill)* / Elizabeth Stevenson, *Lafcadio Hearn (Macmillan)* / Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President (Atheneum)* / Ola Elizabeth Winslow, *John Bunyan (Macmillan)*

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JUDGES LEONIE ADAMS, MARK VAN DOREN AND WILLIAM JAY SMITH ARE CONSIDERING:

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The National Book Awards consist of three prizes of $1,000 each. They are presented annually for three books which panels of judges consider the most distinguished books of fiction, of non-fiction and of poetry written by American citizens and published in the U. S. in the preceding year. The prizes are donated by the sponsors, the American Book Publishers Council, the American Booksellers Association, and the Book Manufacturers Institute. The National Book Awards are administered by the National Book Committee, a non-profit educational association.

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spirits felt he had gone too far—but this was the only dissension; the hubbub, in any case, broke up all previous alignments. In the *Figaro Littéraire* the director of the Galerie Charpentier in Paris was quoted as saying he found beautiful pictures were never expensive enough, and in the distinguished *Art News* editorial by Alfred Frankfurter the Metropolitan was praised for its worldly wisdom. On the front page of the New York *Times*, an extensive article was enlivened by three inset illustrations: first, the check; second, Mr. Rorimer, looking engagingly like a man surprised by success; and thirdly (on an inside page) the Rembrandt itself, looking mysterious, like most Rembrandts. Of course this article had the declared purpose of analyzing the purchase as "market news." However, the *Art News* editorial was entitled "On Quality" and turned out to be one-half—its better or livelier half—about price instead. It couldn't be helped, one supposes—$2,300,000 is a lot of money and even a great painting has a hard time holding its own beside such a claim on human attention.

In the midst of all this, the Rembrandt now hangs in the Metropolitan, floodlit and protected by a few potted plants and a wide roped-off area. It hangs rather too far away for the public to see clearly what is certainly one of Rembrandt's greatest attributes—his technical virtuosity. However, it hangs at just the right distance to show off the umbrageous quality of Rembrandt's style, the golden glitter of the chain Aristotle wears slung across his torso and the luminous cascading masses of his white sleeves. It also hangs at just the right distance to enhance the impact of the conception as a whole—that emanation which gathers up all the qualities of a work of art (composition, style, technique, etc.) to make that leap over the hurdle of time and space and communicate the artist's vision. In my own opinion this painting does not impeccably make that leap: there is a fatal uneasiness, a hesitation—the top rail is touched in going over; "Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer" comes down too heavily on its jump.

The *Art News* editorial states that

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"between . . . Aristotle and the Hellenic bust there is that superb, subtle, two-figure compositional tension. . . ." But there's the rub, I think! There not only seems to me to be no tension, it seems there is little real rapport between the two forms. The only connection between them is through the slight obliquity of Aristotle's stance and the hand he appears to have rather too dogmatically placed on the head of Homer's bust. Against the nocturnal background the bust obtrudes; there is something equivocal and all too human about this piece of sculpture—it has a dappled fleshly look, as if Rembrandt were doubtful of its sufficiency. The brooding figure of the philosopher is congruous with the generalized twilit gloom, but the bust is a "thing" that demands a more specific frame of reference perhaps. The two forms are isolated from each other; for all his splendid presence, Aristotle seems to be posing with a bust that has been fortuitously placed at hand.

Henry James has said that "Rembrandt represents the known . . . in that extraordinary envelope of dense light and shade which is the familiar sign of his manner; but in this it is the execution that is rare—incomparably rare, certainly—rather than the conception." As far as the new Metropolitan acquisition is concerned, I would wholly agree with this. In the case of *Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer* the means must be made to justify the end.

It is hard to fly in the face of authoritative opinion. The authoritative voices that have joined the chorus of remark on the "most expensive painting ever" have judged this to be one of the best works of Rembrandt's best period. I think not, but perhaps even my solitary confrontation is unduly weighted by those $2,300,000.

BETTY KAUFMAN

REVIEWERS

Lawrence T. King, a California newspaperman, writes frequently on social and political questions.

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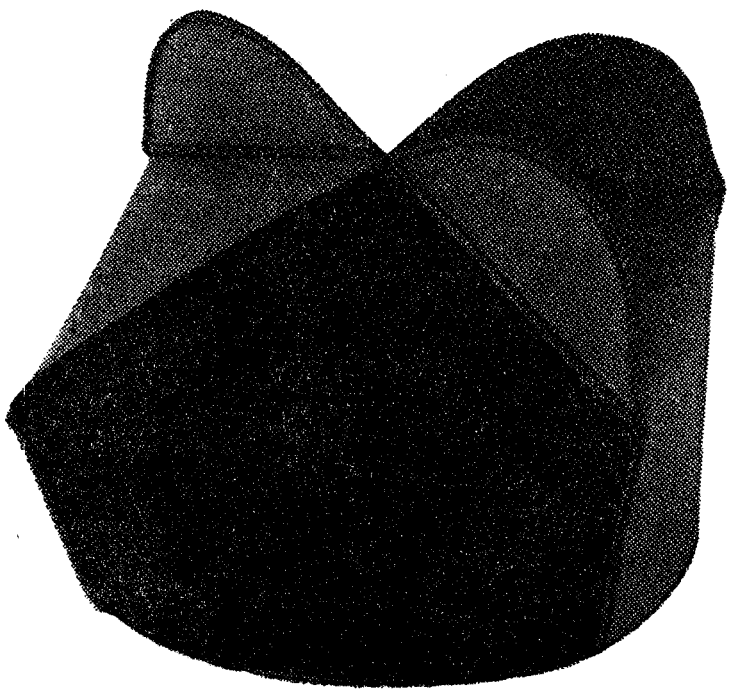

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